

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 11236 201753Z

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ACTION OES-06

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 L-03 EUR-12 FS-01 ABF-01

AGR-05 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 EPA-01 HEW-04 HUD-01

INT-05 LOC-01 NASA-01 NSF-01 OMB-01 SMI-01 TRSE-00

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DEPARTMENT PASS USDA

ROME FOR ARS/GORDON

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, OSCI, TPHY, EG, US

SUBJECT: PRESS CRITICISM OF FORMER MINISTERS' INVOLVEMENT IN ARS
PROJECT GRANT FG-EG-132

1. CAIRO DAILY AL AKHBAR CARRIED EDITORIAL BY GALAL HAMMANSI
ON AUGUST 17 DESCRIBING PARTICIPATION OF FORMER MNAGR OSMAN
BADRAN IN ARS RESEARCHPROJECT GRANT FG-EG-132 ENTITLED
PLANNING AND ESTABLISHING WINDBREAKS IN NORTHWESTERN REGION
OF EGYPT. HAMMANSI CRITICIZED BADRAN'S PARTICIPATION AS
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR BECAUSE BADRAN WAS MINISTER IN CABINET
DURING ENTIRE ASSOCIATION WITH PROJECT. OBVIOUSLY DRAWING
FROM GRANT CORRESPONDENCE, HAMMANSI DESCRIBED VARIOUS
PAYMENTS MADE TO BADRAN AS PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR. EDITORIAL
CLAIMS MINISTER CASHED CHECKS AND DEPOSITED THEM IN HIS
OWN ACCOUNT "WITHOUT ANY DEDUCATIONS", IMPLYING
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PAGE 02 CAIRO 11236 201753Z

THAT BADRAN USED FUNDS PERSONALLY. HE ALSO

DESCRIBED REQUESTS FROM INAGR UNDERSECRETARY AL-ABD FOR FINANCIAL REPORTS. HAMMANSI CHALLENGES THAT, IF MINISTER DID NOT PRESENT REQUESTED FINANCIAL REPORTS, TEN BADRAN SHOULD STATE WHY AND MAKE PUBLIC HOW MONEY HAS BEEN SPENT. HAMMANSI'S FINAL POINT IS THAT BADRAN USED MINISTERIAL POSITION TO HIS OWN BENEFIT, IMPLYING VERY INDIRECTLY THAT HE WOULD NOT HAVE GOTTEN THE PROJECT HAD HE NOT BEEN MINISTER, ALTHOUGH THIS IS NOT AMPLIFIED INTO CRITICISM OF US OR USDA. HE ASKS HOW MANY OTHER CASES OF THIS SORT OUGHT TO BE DISCOVERED AND STOPPED.

2. ACCORDING TO OUR RECORDS, ARS TEAM OF DRS. GORDON AND IMLE NEGOTIATED GRANT FG-EG-132 WITH DR. BADRAN AND MINAGR UNDERSEC SALAH AL-ABD BEGINNING IN OCTOBER, 1973. BADRAM IS DESCRIBED IN ALL GRANT DOCUMENTS WHICH EMBASSY HAS ON FILE AS HEAD, DEPARTMENT OF TIMBER, TREES AND WOOD TECHNOLOGY, FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE, ALEXANDRIA UNIVERSITY. BADRAN WAS ALSO MEMBER OF CABINET (MINISTER OF LAND RECLAMATION) IN OCTOBER, 1973. AGAIN ACCORDING TO OUR RECORDS, BADRAN HAS SUBMITTED ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION AND IN COPIES OF LETTERS TO MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE FROM ARS, HE HAS COMPLIED WITH ALL OF REQUIREMENTS OF GRANT SATISFACTORILY TO DATE. WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER BADRAN HIMSELF DID THE RESEARCH WORK WHILE HE WAS MINISTER OR, AS IS MORE LIKELY, FARMED IT OUT TO OTHERS. AS FAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE, WE SEE NO EVIDENCE OF MALFEASANCE ON PART OF BADRAN FROM STANDPOINT OF HIS OBLIGATIONS TO USDA.

3. COMMENT: HAMMANSI'S ARTICLE IS GRAPHIC EVIDENCE OF NEED FOR CAUTION IN CONTINUING PROCESS OF DEVELOPING SFCP PROJECTS IN EGYPT. AS DEPARTMENT AND CONCERNED AGENCIES ARE AWARE, IT WAS PRACTICE DURING PERIOD WHEN WE HAD NO DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS FOR SCIENTIFIC AGENCIES TO WORK DIRECTLY WITH EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT MINISTERS IN DEVELOPING RESEARCH PROJECTS. IN THIS SPECIFIC CASE, FACT THAT BADRAN ALSO WAS ACTUALLY NAMED PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR SEEMS BE PRIMARY CRITICISM. RELATED PROBLEM, OF COURSE, IS SHORTAGE OF QUALIFIED MAN POWER AND WELL-KNOWN DIFFICULTY OF IDENTIFYING ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF COMPETENT RESEARCH. WE SUSPECT THIS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 CAIRO 11236 201753Z

WAS REASON FOR SELECTING BADRAN IN FIRST PLACE/QUITE ASIDE FROM FACT THAT HE WAS RESPONSIBLE MINISTER.

4. REVELATION ABOUT BADRAN'S PARTICIPATION IN PROJECT IS CLEARLY MOTIVATED BY ATTACK WHICH WAS PREVIOUSLY LEVELLED AGAINST HAMMANSI BY PRESIDENT SADAT FOR CRITICIZING GOVERNMENT WITHOUT BEING ABLE TO BACK UP CRITICISM WITH FACTS; ARTICLE IS TITLED "A FLAGRANT CASE WITH NAMES

AND NUMBERS". BASED UPON OUR FILES HAMMANSI'S FACTS
ARE INDEED CORRECT EXCEPT FOR IMPLICATION THAT BADRAN DID
NOT FILE FINANCIAL REPORTS, WHICH HE DID. QUESTION OF WHETHER
BADRAN SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
WHILE HE WAS MINISTER IS QUESTION FOR EGYPTIANS THEMSELVES
TO DECIDE. FORTUNATELY, NO CRITICISM OF SFCP GRANT PROGRAM
ITSELF IS ANYWHERE IMPLIED IN HAMMANSI'S ARTICLE.

5. REQUEST ANY THOUGHTS WHICH DEPARTMENT OR INTERESTED
AGENCIES MIGHT HAVE REGARDING HAMMANSI'S EDITORIAL. WE
ARE ALSO REVIEWING OUR FILES ON A CONTINGENCY BASIS TO
DETERMINE IF ANY OTHER MINISTERS, PRESENT OR PAST, ARE
INVOLVED IN GRANT PROGRAMS SO THAT THERE WILL BE NO UNNECESSARY
FUTURE SURPRISES.
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